Vol. III. Numb. 59.

THE OBSERVATOR.

Of a Report of the Observators *being Beaten. Of the Count* De Tholouse's *Taking the* English Smirna *Fleet. Observations on the* Paris *Gazette. The Advantage of False Accounts. Of the Case of the* Cevennois.

From **Wednesday** October the 11th, to **Saturday** October the 14th, 1704.

Obs. YOU look very Dull, Honest *Country-man*, I see by your Phiz, you have either got no News, or some News that is very Bad.

Country-m. I have got some News, and good News too; but when you go to *London* you never acquaint me with the News you hear or feel.

Obs. Feeling of News is new indeed.

Country-m. Why, when you were at *London* last, you were Beat Severely, at *Rowes* Coffee-House, near the *Bridge-Foot*; and that News I am sure you must feel.

Obs. The poor *Observator* is the Foot-Ball of the Town; every Rogue has a Kick at him, and yet you see he looks well, and feels no Blows.

Country-m. I told 'em they were Lying Rogues, and that you did not complain of the Blows.

Obs. Indeed, Honest *Country-man*, I have been sadly Beaten within this Twelve Month last past; but the *Jacks* have got the new way of Fighting at a distance: About Three Months ago I was horribly Beaten in *London*, when I was about Threescore Mile in the Country; and at every turn I am Beaten, and Thrash'd, and Threaten'd to be Stabb'd, but I can meet with none of the People; and I will give a good Gratuity to any one that shall Inform me, who the Persons are that Threaten to Stab me, or that say they have Beaten me.

Country-m. You know Lying is the Support of a certain Cause, and Bragging of Fighting is in Fashion. But you need not fear these Bullies, they Talk more than they'll Perform.

Obs. Well, but hast got ever a real Fighting Story?

Country-m. I can't tell, but I'll give it you as I have it. The *Paris* News, for the Edification of the *Jacobites* and *Nonjurors*, and for the Support of their Drooping Spirits, tells the World that the *French* have taken all our *Smirna* Fleet in the *Streights*, worth I don't know how many Thousands of Pounds.

Obs. Where did they take 'em upon *Banstead* Downs?

Country-m. Look'ye d'ye see, now you begin to Banter at what I tell you.

Obs. It must be somewhere thereabouts, if near Home, or if Abroad, on the *Alps*, or the *Pyranean Hills*.

Country-m. Bless me! You are the strangest Man Living; you'll make me Mad. Ships Fight on the top of Hills! Sure you han't had your Breakfast to Day, you are so much out of Humour. Here *Joan*, bring a Toast and Cheese and a Pot of *October*, for Master *Observators* Breakfast.

Obs. Prithee, Man, we have no *Smirna* Fleet Abroad, and how the *French* should take them then, is a Riddle.

Country-m. A Riddle; no, 'tis a Damn'd Lye, and could not you have told me so, without a long Vexatious Preamble.

Obs. I thought I had told you enough of that Legend, the *Paris* Gazette, and that you knew better than to believe it; you know but lately they told us how they Beat Sir *George Rook* in the *Streights*; and yet, according to their own Confession, they did not carry Home one *English* Ship, as a Sample of their Victory: They say that Sir *George* run away from them; and in the same Paper they tell us, that two or three Days after they came up with him, and had the Weather-Gage of his Fleet, and that he lay by to receive them; now these Lies and Inconsistencies can be Swallowed by none but the *Jacks*, and let 'em Swallow 'em till they are Choakt.

Country-m. Master *Observator*, I would have all the News Papers that mention the News from *France* Prosecuted, for the Nation ought not to be Pester'd with Lies.

Obs. Thou talkest strangely, I like those News Papers best, that give us most of the *Paris* News, for several Reasons.

In the *First* place, We hereby see the Vanity of our Enemies, which concludes their Impotence, that they have recourse to such Notorious Falshoods for the Support of their Cause, and to amuse their own People.

Secondly, The People of *England* (the *Jacks* excepted) can never be amused hereat, for we have the Truth of such Transactions Published by the Government. Our News, by Authority, did not tell us, that Sir *George Rook* had Taken half the *French* Fleet, and Sunk the other half: Upon the Arrival of our Fleet from the *Streights*, we rather find our Success to be greater, than what was at first told us; so that the People of *England* can make a true Judgment of the condition of our own Government, and the Strength of our Enemies, in that our Government Dares Publish to the whole World the Truth of their Actions, when the Government of *France* is forc'd to hide its Weakness under the covering of Lies, and abominable Falshoods.

In the *Third* place, The Publishing of the *French* News does a Kindness to the poor *Jacks* and *Nonjurors*, Men of great Faith, that believe the *Paris* Gazette as an Oracle. Had they all been on the Beach at *Portsmouth*, when Sir *George Rook* came to St. *Hellens*, they could not have seen his Fleet, nay, they durst not believe their own Eyes, after the *Paris* Gazette had told 'em the contrary.

These Men are Infatuated with a strange sort of Credulity, and Incredulity at the same time; they can believe any thing against the Government, but nothing for it; they can Wager against the Government, a thing worthy of Notice, that a Wager Office should be kept for that purpose. He that Wages against the Government can never be

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for the Government, and can never Wish or Pray for its Success, since the contrary is his Interest.

The *Jacobites* in *England* are of the same Humour with the Slaves of *France*, and do all I can I cannot perswade 'em to go and Live in that Country. I am sure, could I find any Government in the World better than that of *England*, I would not stay in this Country a Month longer: In *France* they may live under an Arbitrary Government; may partake of the Discipline of the Rack and the Gallies, there they may pay Taxes without Parliaments, and Live upon the thin Food of Lies and Falshoods; and since they Delight in these things, why don't they go to what, in their esteem, would make 'em perfectly Happy?

But 'tis a strange thing that Men, who have common Reason, should be Bigotted into a Belief of such apparent Contradictions. After the Engagement in the *Streights*, the Slaves of St. *Malo*, *Dinant*, and the Port Towns in *Normandy* were told, That the *English* Fleet was Totally Destroy'd, that Sir *George Rook* was Kill'd, that Sir *Cloudesly Shovel* had lost three or four of his Legs, and was Dead of his Wounds, that we had lost at least Twenty Thousand Men in the Action; and we could never put a Fleet to Sea, and when a *French* Officer was told by an *Englishman That the Queen had a better Fleet of Ships at Home than that she sent this Year to the* Streights, the *Frenchman* reply'd, *If she had such a Fleet she wanted Men to Man them.* Now all these Stories do these poor People Believe; nay, they must Believe 'em.

And yet these Relations do *England* no harm, either at Home or Abroad: Abroad they cannot; for Stories of Success are no real Victories: We can no more Judge of a *Victory* by the Singing of *Te Deum* in the Musick-Booth at *Paris*, than we can Judge of a *Defeat* by thy Carter's Whistling a lamentable Tune to his Team of Horses.

At Home these False Stories can do the Government no Mischief; for no Wise Man will believe 'em, and for the Enemies of the Government, 'tis necessary they should believe 'em, for whilst their Thoughts are pleased with these Idle Romances, they are Diverted from Mischievous Considerations; 'tis the same thing to them as a Rattle to a Child, it keeps 'em Quiet. And therefore, for the Future, don't be Angry at the *Paris* Gazette, Untruths, as well as Truths, are good in their Season.

Country-m. Upon my Word you have made a fine Speech in Praise of Lying; but I don't find that you encourage the making of Lies, and so far 'tis well enough; and I wish what you say may be true, that we have no *Smirna* Fleet Abroad, but, I'll assure you, the *Jacks* say they are above Fifty Sail.

Obs. I know 'tis False; perhaps a Convoy of ours, with some few Ships, has fallen in with the Count *de Tholouse*'s Squadron, and according to the Common Practice of the *French*, they may be magnified to a Fleet. Have a little Patience, and you'll find what I say to be True. —— What other News hast thou?

Country-m. You were in Pain, the last time we parted, about the Welfare of our good Friends and Allies (as I thank God we may now call them) the *Cevennois*. But now I have a Word of Comfort from those Brave Men. They are grown Resolute, and have made a Death among themselves for any of them so much as to mention the making of Terms with *France*.

Obs. And yet you see the *Paris* Lies Paper, says, That they have all Submitted, save 70 or 80 that are retired into the Woods; and that the *French* King is drawing off his Forces in that Country, to be employ'd elsewhere now the Civil War is over. You may Mark by the way, that the *French* themselves call that a *Civil War*, which our *High-Flyers* call'd a *Rebellion*, and from that Head argued, That Her *Britannick* Majesty ought not to Assist them.

But this was no rub in the way; the Levies for their Assistance, under the Marquis *Merimont*, go on successfully; and I hope, next Spring there will be such a Descent from the *Cevennes*, that will yet more Embarass the Affairs of *France*. I know no Place where *France* can be more sensibly touch'd, than in that Quarter: His Troops are at a vast Distance, or else he must use those in that Service, that he will dearly want in *Savoy*. Otherwise he must Evacuate his Garisons, in which he has a very considerable Army, if they were Marshall'd into a Body. But these Garison Towns being Maintain'd in his Country, only to Awe his own Subjects, and to keep them in Obedience; he durst not weaken them at this time, when his People are on Tip-Toe to Revolt, a thing I believe he dreads as much as any. They want only an Opportunity of Recovering their Liberties, and without the help of the Stars, I can Prognosticate such an Opportunity they will have in the space of one Year.

Country-m. I pray God you be *Johns*. I will very willingly Pay Ten Shillings in the Pound upon that Score, If either the Duke of *Marlborough* enters his Country, or that we make a Descent by Sea. I want to have the *English* Boys in the Heart of *France*, to Teach the Songsters how to Sing *Te Deum*. I fancy they would make brave Sport with the Bacon-Headed Fellows, the Priests of all Orders. Let 'em go a Gods Name, I want the Duke to let 'em Loose, as he did at *Heghstead*; I'll warrant 'em they'll play their Parts. Come, Master *Observator*, here's to their good March into *France*, and we'll Talk no more of 'em till after Dinner.

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